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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was twofold: first, to investigate new teachers' perceptions of needs for multicultural education in teacher preparation programs; and second, to better understand the meanings new teachers give to the term multiculturalism. Interviews conducted with nine practicing teachers, recent university graduates, focused on their recommendations for teacher education, their definitions of the term multiculturalism, and their rankings of a series of goals based on a typology of approaches to multicultural education. Themes in responses and similarities and differences between teachers' views and views explicated in the literature on multicultural education were sought. Teachers' recommendations included references to: course work in multicultural content, knowledge construction, and pedagogy; field experiences; and qualifications and characteristics of teacher education faculty. Teachers' definitions of multiculturalism included involving students of all backgrounds and understanding perspectives of different groups. Most of the teachers (five of nine) ranked the goal "teach human relations and social harmony" highest. The goal most frequently ranked last was "teach students to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture." The report concludes with implications for future practice and research. (Contains 27 references.)
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New Teachers' Perceptions of the Meaning of the Term *Multiculturalism* and Their Perceptions of the Need for Multiculturalism in Preservice Education

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ABSTRACT

New Teachers' Perceptions of the Meaning of the Term *Multiculturalism* and Their Perceptions of the Need for Multiculturalism in Preservice Education

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to investigate new teachers' perceptions of needs for multicultural education in teacher preparation programs; and second, to better understand the meanings new teachers give to the term multiculturalism.

Nine practicing teachers were interviewed. These teachers were recent graduates of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and were employed as teachers in central Illinois. Interview questions were focused on teachers' recommendations for preservice education in multiculturalism and their definitions of the term multiculturalism. In addition, teachers were asked to rank a series of goals based on Grant and Secada's (1990) interpretation of Grant and Sleeter's typology of approaches to multicultural education.

We listened for themes in the teachers' responses and looked for similarities and differences between these teachers' views and views explicated in the literature on multicultural education.

Teachers' recommendations included references to: course work in multicultural content, knowledge construction, and pedagogy; field experiences; and qualifications and characteristics of teacher education faculty.

Teachers' definitions of multiculturalism included *involving students of all backgrounds* and *understanding perspectives of different groups.*

Most of the teachers (five of the nine) ranked the goal *teach human relations and social harmony* highest. The goal most frequently ranked last was *teach students to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture.*

This report closes with implications for future practice and research.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate new teachers' perceptions of the need for multicultural education in teacher preparation programs. This purpose encompasses an attempt to better understand the meanings which these novice practitioners give to the term *multiculturalism*. This will include comparisons between participants' understandings and the meanings explicated in the literature.

Everyone in education is facing a "demographic imperative" (Banks, 1991, p.1): the need to recognize and address the fact that our nation's population is rapidly becoming more diverse. Banks tell us that, at the present time, approximately one person out of four in the United States is a person of color and that, by 2020, this number will be approaching one person out of two in the school-age population. He further states that "students of color constitute a majority in twenty-five of the nation's largest school districts and in California, our most populous state with a population of thirty million people" (p. 1).

Hodgkinson, who looks at diversity with the demographer's perspective of people in motion, exhorts educators at all levels to reconceptualize education as a single continuum along which they must work together to address students' needs:

> [W]hat is coming toward the educational system is a group of children who will be poorer, more ethnically and linguistically diverse, and who will have more handicaps that will affect their learning. Most important, by around the year 2000, America will be a nation in which one of every *THREE* of us will be non-white. And minorities will

> cover a broader socioeconomic range than ever before, making simplistic treatment of their needs even less useful. (1985, p. 7)

At the same time that the diversity of the children who attend our schools is increasing, the trend in the educational workforce is toward decreasing diversity. The statistics portraying the diversity of those who are entering traditional (four-year undergraduate) teacher preparation programs indicate a downward trend in the percentage of African Americans enrolling, even in historically Black colleges and universities. Mills and Buckley (1992, pp. 135-136) point out that Black teachers are fast disappearing from the profession, and that historically Black colleges and universities must therefore help the growing population of white students going into education to "become proficient in both cross-cultural understanding and navigation of the culture of the Black children whom they will be entrusted to educate." Zimpher and Ashburn (1992, p. 41) describe future cohorts of teachers as reiterations of those of today:

> Findings from a random sample of teacher education programs stratified by institutional type show the average preservice student is typically a white female from a small town or suburban community who matriculates in a college less than one hundred miles away from home and intends to return to small town America to teach middle-income children of average intelligence in traditionally organized schools.

Teacher educators, like the typical undergraduates, are not a very diverse group. Citing research by Schuster and Bowery, Boyle-Baise and Grant state: "90% of the faculty were Anglo-American, 5% were African-American, 4% were Asian-American; and 72% were male" (1992, p. 179). Also, many of these professors have never taught students with backgrounds

different from their own, whether at the P-12 (pre-school through twelfth grade) level or in academia. Haberman (1991, p. 276) remarks that "less than 5 percent of education faculty have ever taught in urban schools." Boyle-Baise and Grant point out that "a large proportion (44.7%) of the teacher education faculty were tenured and older . . . . These statistics suggest that most faculty were trained when monocultural and segregated schools were the norm. Unless these faculty received in-service training, they know little about multicultural education" (p. 179). Thus, neither professional wisdom gained from practice in diverse classrooms nor multiple perspectives and insights from a diverse in-house teacher education faculty will be available at most colleges and universities preparing people for careers in P-12 education.

Grant and Secada, in discussing the increasingly white female teaching force, the increasingly diverse student population, and the role of predominantly white male faculty in schools of education, assert:

> The multiple discontinuities—between student population and teaching force demographics and between teaching force and teacher educator demographics—should elicit a broad range of responses among researchers, policymakers, members of the teaching profession, and others who are concerned about the education of our children. (1990, p. 404)

One response to the "multiple discontinuities" of Grant and Secada has been the incorporation of diversity standards into the accreditation process. Gollnick states that "the major impetus for the incorporation of multicultural education in teacher education has been the standards for national accreditation" (1992, p. 225). In 1989, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), by which 514 of the approximately 1200 colleges and universities that prepare teachers were voluntarily accredited,

incorporated multicultural education concepts into its standards for professional studies, clinical experiences, students and faculty (pp. 225, 227).

Another response, at the institutional level, has been to redesign teacher preparation programs to incorporate multicultural components or to redesign entire programs with a multicultural perspective. Boyle-Baise and Grant (1992, p.180) state that "regardless of . . . constraining factors, universities and colleges are jumping on the 'multicultural' bandwagon and pressing expectations for teacher educators to provide teacher training in multicultural education." Some colleges and universities may be driven by the need to meet state requirements for course work which will help preservice teachers to understand the role of culture in how children learn and/or to provide field work in a multicultural setting (Mastain, 1991, pp. C-4, C-5). Other institutions may be responding to a moral imperative to prepare educators to successfully teach all students who will be in their care.

In developing the current study, we were motivated not only by the literature, which made salient the national need to address diversity in preservice teacher education, but by the circumstances and recommendations of recent University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign graduates who noted that they were teaching in more diverse settings than those of the schools from which they had graduated. Furthermore, the category entitled "multicultural issues and perspectives" was second only to "classroom management techniques" among the areas in which our recent graduates indicated they wished they had a stronger background (Holste & Matthews, 1993, p. 20).

Recent proposals calling for the university to listen more closely to practitioners (e.g., the Holmes Group, 1986), feedback from our own graduates, and the multicultural literature motivated us to pursue the first

goal of this study: to listen to our recent graduates' recommendations for multicultural preservice education.

Despite widespread mandates to prepare teachers for diversity, we realized that there is no consensus in the literature on what multiculturalism is or what multicultural education ought to look like. Banks defines multiculturalism as "a philosophical position and movement that assumes that the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of the institutionalized structures of educational institutions, including the staff, the norms and values, the curriculum, and the student body" (1993, p. 359). Nieto, however, differentiates between *additive* multiculturalism, which is "learning that builds on previous knowledge and experiences in the first culture" and *subtractive* multiculturalism, which is "learning that ignores previous knowledge and experiences in the first culture and thus detracts from developing more extensive knowledge and awareness of other cultures" (1992, p. 307).

McCarthy identifies three mainstream approaches to multicultural education embodied in school curricula, pre-service teacher-education program guides, and theories of multicultural advocates—*cultural understanding*, *cultural competence*, and *cultural emancipation*—and criticizes them for their inadequate theory bases and their lack of solutions to the problem of racial inequality in schooling (1993, pp. 291-292). He advocates "critical multiculturalism," which he defines as "the radical redefinition of school knowledge from the heterogeneous perspectives and identities of racially disadvantaged groups—a process that goes beyond the language of 'inclusivity' and emphasizes relationality and multivocality as the central intellectual forces in the production of knowledge" (p. 290).

Finally, pointing out his unease in using the term, Asa G. Hilliard states: "My definition of 'multicultural' is 'the truth.' I don't like the term 'multiculturalism' at all. I don't like to use any kind of 'ism.' . . . Multiculturalism, to me, sounds like an ideology, like you've got some kind of story that you're trying to sell" (Hilliard, as interviewed by Reed, 1993, p. 14).

Because of this lack of consensus on the meaning of multiculturalism, we chose as the second focus of this study an investigation of how new teachers themselves define the term "multiculturalism." We also include this focus because (a) previous beliefs influence learning (Anderson & Pearson, 1984); (b) at times, teacher education students hold definitions of key terms that are so contrary to their professors' definitions that discussions between professors and students are, in effect, "sabotaged" (Holt-Reynolds, 1992); and (c) many advocates of multicultural teacher education believe that its goal is not merely to provide information to teachers, but to bring about conceptual change (e.g., Shaw, 1993). If conceptual change is indeed a goal, it is necessary to know both what teachers' pre-existing beliefs are and why they hold these beliefs.

We decided to use Sleeter and Grant's (1994; Grant & Secada, 1990) Five Approaches to Multicultural Education as an initial guide to our investigation of teachers' beliefs. Grant and Secada note that this classification system "grew out of the way classroom teachers teach multicultural curriculum and the way multicultural education is discussed in the professional literature. In the present usage, it provides a broad base on which to analyze studies of teacher education and research that look at race, class, language, ethnic background, and gender socialization" (p. 408). A

summary of each of Sleeter and Grant's Five Approaches to Multicultural Education follows (Sleeter & Grant, 1994; Grant & Secada, 1990):

1. ***Teaching the Exceptional and the Culturally Different,*** which attempts remediation to help fit such children (e.g., lower-class, minority, special education, or limited English proficient students) into the existing social structure and culture, without questioning the dominant culture's aims. To state it more explicitly, this approach seeks to have students "adapt to the norms of the dominant culture" (Grant & Secada, 1990, p. 408). Curriculum is made relevant to students' experiential background, instruction is built on students' learning styles and first language skills, and dominant traditional educational aims are taught by building bridges between the students and the demands of the school. An attempt is made to involve the parents of these children in supporting the work of the school.

2. ***Human Relations,*** which attempts to foster positive affective relationships among individuals belonging to diverse racial and cultural groups and/or between males and females. This approach involves all students in reducing stereotyping, appreciating individual differences and similarities, promoting self-esteem, and increasing school and social harmony within the existing social structure. Cooperative learning will be included in the teacher's instructional repertoire because it teaches diverse groups of students to work together to achieve common goals. Institutional policies will honor and include all groups of students, and an "I'm okay, you're okay" theme will prevail.

3. ***Single-Group Studies,*** which promotes social structural equality for and immediate recognition of an oppressed group such as Native Americans, African Americans, or women by teaching separate units or courses about the history, contributions, and current issues facing the group from the group's

own perspective. Through this consciousness-raising, the members of the group and others will be motivated to work toward social change to benefit the identified group. The institution will employ faculty who belong to these groups.

4. ***Multicultural Education***, which promotes social structural equality and cultural pluralism by organizing all curriculum around the contributions and perspectives of different cultural groups, and which pays close attention to gender equity. Critical thinking skills, perspective-taking, analysis of differing viewpoints, and the study of foreign languages will all be included in the curriculum, and accommodating students' learning styles and using cooperative learning will be instructional strategies. Within the school, staffing, extra-curricular activities, special events, and parent involvement will reflect the commitment to promote equal opportunity, respect for differences, and support for power equity among groups. The "tossed salad" metaphor is often used for this approach to multicultural education.

5. ***Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist***, which teaches all students to analyze inequality and oppression in society, and empowers them to work actively toward social structural equality and cultural pluralism. Within the classroom, students are involved in cooperative learning and in democratic decision making, and instruction accommodates their learning styles and skill levels. As in the multicultural education approach, the school climate will reflect and celebrate the diversity of the larger society. However, students will share in the democratic decision making about substantive school-wide concerns, and will be involved in local community action projects. In teaching students to question the status quo and to use their own life experiences as a starting point for analyzing oppression, this approach prepares students to become reflective, caring,

socially responsible citizens who will work together effectively to achieve cooperatively agreed upon goals.

In sum, the purpose of this study is (a) to report new teachers' recommendations for preservice multicultural education, and (b) to better understand the meanings new teachers give to the term "multiculturalism." In the process of reporting teachers' definitions and recommendations, we will analyze how these compare to the recommendations, goals, and approaches to multicultural education that are identified in the professional literature.

METHODS

Subjects

We interviewed nine teachers who were recent graduates of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). We began by sending invitations to recent teacher education graduates of UIUC who were living nearby. To increase the size of the pool, we then pursued potential interviewees through referrals from our colleagues. Potential interviewees received a letter indicating that the purpose of the study was to find out more about their views regarding multiculturalism.

The teachers in this study had graduated between nine months and three and a half years prior to being interviewed. Eight of the nine teachers were females. All held teaching positions in central Illinois, with five at the elementary level, one at the middle school level, and three at the high school level.

The following are thumbnail sketches of each of our participants:

Gabi is certified in elementary education. She has taught at an integrated grade school for three and a half years. Because of her family's influence, her experiences in attending a diverse high school, and her own interests, Gabi describes herself as having a lot of multicultural awareness before entering college.

Belinda is certified in early childhood education. She has been teaching for one and a half years in a school which has a high level of linguistic diversity. At the time she entered college, Belinda describes her multicultural awareness as an "us and them," that is, a black/white perspective.

Paige is certified in secondary education and has been teaching in an integrated secondary school for one and a half years. She feels that she was somewhat prejudiced before she entered college because she had little exposure to people from backgrounds different from her own.

Melodie is certified in elementary education and has taught in an integrated elementary school for three and a half years. She states that she had no multicultural awareness at the time she entered the university.

Mandy is certified in secondary education and has been teaching in an integrated high school for approximately six months. She describes her multicultural awareness at the time she entered the university as extremely limited.

Nicole is certified in elementary education and has been teaching for six months at an integrated elementary school. At the time she entered college, she was aware of both Black culture and white culture, but not other groups.

Barbara is certified in elementary education and has been teaching in an integrated elementary school for one and a half years. Her multicultural awareness at the time she entered college was "a lot better" than when she was a child attending all-white rural schools, because she attended an integrated high school and made many friends and had a chance to be aware of other people's perspectives. Barbara had previously taught at the high school and the pre-school level before obtaining her elementary certification.

Michael is certified in secondary education and has taught at integrated high schools for one and a half years. He cannot remember multicultural issues being raised before he went to college.

Katie is certified in secondary education and has taught in an integrated high school for six months. She characterized herself as "not very aware" of multicultural issues at the time she entered college.

Materials

A pre-interview written questionnaire was used to obtain demographic information. That questionnaire included items to assess participants' multicultural training and background. The interview consisted mainly of open-ended questions designed to elicit teachers' understandings of multiculturalism and their sense of what is important in multicultural education, both in the schools and in preservice teacher education. The interview also included some questions regarding possible influences on teachers' views, providing data which will be analyzed in a separate paper.

Procedure

Participants knew the basic purposes of this study from the letters that recruited them. Volunteers for the study received the written questionnaire by mail, which they completed independently before the interview. The participants then met with the interviewer (the first author) for approximately one hour.

The interviewer followed the same protocol with all participants, but followed question items with both unplanned and planned probes when she sensed that further clarification or amplification would be useful.

RESULTS

In analyzing the data, we kept in mind several methodological concerns. Primarily, we wanted "the reader to function as a co-analyst" (Erickson, 1986, p. 145). We intended to provide sufficient data that our readers would be able to judge the validity of our interpretations.

Our first methodological decision was to use triangulation, that is, multiple data types, in the collection of the data. This led to the development of both quantitatively and qualitatively stated items. For example, by asking participants to rank order a list of goals for multicultural education (based on Grant & Secada, 1990, which was based on earlier work by Grant and Sleeter) we collected data that allowed us to check our own interpretations of the weight participants gave to various goals when they were answering the qualitative questions.

The quantitative data—the rankings of goals for multicultural education—were summarized descriptively. Frequencies were calculated for those goals respondents ranked first on the list and those goals respondents ranked last.

The analysis of the interviews themselves borrowed from the traditions of qualitative research. Charmaz (1983, building on earlier work by Glaser and Strauss) notes distinctions between quantitative and qualitative approaches to dealing with data: "Quantitative coding requires preconceived, logically deduced codes into which the data are placed. Qualitative coding, in contrast, means creating categories from interpretation of the data" (p. 111). Our own analyses fell somewhere in between: the interview questions and some of our initial interpretations were undoubtedly shaped by preconceived notions of what others had considered important in multicultural education;

yet, when analyzing the data, we did not feel strictly bound by any pre-existing categories.

Although we did not follow Mishler's (1986) methodology, we did respond to his concern that interviews not result in a set of highly controlled, stimulus-response data. We concur with Mishler's view that "questioning and answering are ways of speaking that are grounded in and depend on culturally shared and often tacit assumptions about how to express and understand beliefs, experiences, feelings, and intentions" (p. 7). In other words, the joint construction of meaning of both questions and responses is recognized in both the conduct of the interviews and in our efforts to interpret the data.

Mishler (1986) also expressed concern for the issue of respondent empowerment; we followed what Mishler noted as an ethnographic tradition of viewing "interviewees as informants or competent observers" (p. 123). This view is in contrast to a common view in research about teachers, in which teachers are studied in order to determine how they need to be changed. Our view is that the respondents are interviewed to inform the discussion of multicultural teacher education; we will be open to practitioners' comments containing suggestions or implications for change in the thinking of academics.

The interview data are left in qualitative, or verbal, form. We include representative quotes and counter-examples. However, we give importance to Erickson's (1986) concern that merely citing an interesting case "does not demonstrate to the reader the validity of . . . assertions about the significance of the instance. This can only be done by citing analogous instances—linking the key event to others like it or different from it" (p. 151). In this study, the linking was done in either of two ways: (a) by including multiple quotes

where related themes were expressed, or (b) through triangulation, that is, relating the narrative data to the quantitative. The determination of themes occurred through repeated readings of the transcripts and frequent discussions between the authors of this study.

Throughout the writing of this paper, we returned frequently to Erickson's concern that a study be presented in such a way that the reader can function as a co-analyst.

Quantitative findings

Respondents ranked a set teaching goals for a multicultural society. These five goals are extracted from Grant and Secada's (1990) interpretation of Grant and Sleeter's five approaches to multicultural education. The majority of respondents ranked *teach human relations and social harmony* as the highest goal (Table 1). The goal most frequently ranked lowest was *teach the students to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture* (Table 2).

Table 1

Frequency with which each goal was ranked first. (Goals were adapted from Grant & Secada's 1990 interpretation of Grant and Sleeter.)

N Ranked First	Item
5	Teach human relations and social harmony.
2	Teach students to analyze inequality and to work together for social change.
2	Teach students to promote equity and pluralism.
0	Teach separate units or courses on the history, contributions, and oppression of specific, often overlooked groups such as African Americans and women.
0	Teach the student to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture.

Table 2

Frequency with which each goal was ranked lowest.

N Ranked Lowest	Item
6	Teach students to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture.
3	Teach separate units or courses.

As a preliminary step, the qualitative data were summarized into tables for each of the questions of primary interest. We created tables which included all the teachers' recommendations, tables for their definitions, and tables for their explanations for their rankings of goals. As an example, we

have included a table which lists the participants' explanations for their low rankings for *adapt to the norms* and *teach separate units* (Table 3).

Each of the tables was reviewed for themes or categories of responses. The narrative responses—the qualitative data—were then embedded in the discussions that follow.

Table 3.

Participants' explanations for ranking a goal lowest.

Teach the Student to Adapt to the Norms

(Let's talk a little bit about your last choice, which was teach the student to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture.)
Mandy: OK. I think that just ties in with the whole deal of multiculturalism, that if we're expecting the minorities to just, "OK, you change your ways and we're the dominant ones so please just follow along the way we do it." That's a big slap in their face, you know? For years that they've been growing gradually on the latter and gaining more and more respect, if we come back and now say "stop where you're going, we need to do it our way," it's just/it's just going to blow the system, to put it in frank terms, I guess.

(Let's look at your last choice which was teach the students to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture. And could you explain a little bit about why you chose that as the lowest ranking goal?)
Barbara: I'm not sure I even like that! (Well, OK, I'd like to hear why you don't like it.) Um...I think there are times when everybody has to adapt to whatever dominance is there (uh-huh) but...just to say that we're going to teach children that they always have to adapt, I don't think they always do. I think...it just strikes me wrong to even say that I'm going to teach somebody that...(laughter) I'm going to teach them what's appropriate for the situation, I'm not going to teach them that they're adapting to a dominant culture. I don't think I could ever do that.

(Let's talk a little bit about why you ranked your choice of teach the students to adapt to the norms as lowest.)
Nicole: I don't, I don't, I won't do this. I won't tell my children to, they have, they're getting this message too often, and it's a misguided message, that they have to be something that they're not. That, it's, and that's not fair. And they would know that, my children would be able to tell you that it's not fair that they have to be like everyone else. That they have to be able to bring their own lunch from home, and it's not good to eat at the breakfast program. You know, they, they, I don't think it's right for them to feel, it makes, this causes an inferiority complex, if you ask me, so I won't teach them that. I understand that it's important that there's a mainstream of people and they're going to be expected to flow in that mainstream when they get older. And I don't have a problem with teaching them to cope, but I'm not going to tell them they have to become something they're not.

(And lastly, you had chosen...teach a student to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture. OK. And could you explain why you ranked that lowest?)
Belinda: I think that that's kind of what we're not trying to do is, we're trying to address that a unified culture not subserving to, submitting to another culture, just because that's the dominant or the majority.

(And how about your lowest ranking "teaching the students to adapt"?)
Gabi: I don't/it seemed in how it was worded that you were wanting everyone to become the norm and I don't want that to happen at all. It would be a very boring place if everyone were this exact normal situation and I don't expect people to change if they can succeed in society and get what they want staying the same way that they are. Now there are some behaviors that they might say "this is the way it's done" it gets kind of sticky. For example, if you had a person that couldn't speak or read proper English, you might need to say well that's fine for some situations but you need to be able to do this in other situations so that you can get along in society the way it is. So I didn't/I just didn't like how that would be teaching .

(And fifth on your list was teach the student to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture.)
Michael: Yes, that's a fact, I mean, it's going to happen, but I don't want to say that. It's like saying "well, you can't change anything; you are going to have to live in the 'so-called' white man's world, or whatever. But I believe that you can, you know, change things to some extent. So, it's just not something I would/that would come out of my mouth. I mean it may be a fact, and it is, and always will be, but that's not something I would say in my class, hopefully.

Teach Separate Units or Courses

(And then as the least important you had chosen, teach separate units or courses on the history contributions and oppression. Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose that as last?)
Melodie: Well, I think that's important but maybe/not/definitely not at this age level. And where it's good to have some knowledge of those, like I need knowledge; I don't also want to teach them how they're different. I want to teach them right now how they're alike.

(OK. Let's take a look at your lowest ranking which was teach separate units or courses on history and contributions. And could you comment just a little bit on that one?)
Paige: I guess I read that wrong. (OK) I think, I was thinking it was being segregated type of teaching. But I guess it wouldn't really be, if you focus on one group and then focus on another. (That's OK . . . . Let's talk about it as you interpreted it.) OK. (As if we were assuming that it was segregated.) That's what I thought. (OK, let's go with that. OK?) I think it just kind of flows together. Otherwise I start thinking we're good because of this instead of how we all work together.

(And last choice was teaching separate units. Could you tell me a little bit about why you chose that as the lowest ranking?)
Katie: Well, I think that it/all those are important, you know, overlooked groups. I think that they should be/I don't think they should be separate courses. I think they should be part of other courses. I don't think/I just don't think they should be separate. That's why I chose it last, because I think overlooked groups, such as African Americans and women, should be included like a literature course. It should not just include African American writers or women writers. It should include everyone. (OK.) And the other thing is because I think one reason is, for example, I had a women's studies course at [another university] on theology. And the whole class, they were all women, except one male. I think he ended up dropping and I just/it was always/it wasn't like how men and women and everyone fit together, it was just how women. That's all they were thinking about. And I think when you separate it out you're being just as narrow-minded as when you think of only a majority group. Or, I think you need to think of everything together, the big picture.

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DISCUSSION

Teachers' Definitions and Goals

In the process of reviewing the data on teachers' definitions of multiculturalism, we heard two noteworthy themes: concerns for *involving students of all backgrounds* and concerns for *understanding perspectives of different groups.*

Involving students of all backgrounds

Several teachers defined multiculturalism as a concern for "involving" or "including" all students in the social and academic workings of the classroom. Mandy noted, "It's involving every race, every religion . . . . [I] try to involve them in every activity. If I have pictures, I try to have pictures of every type of person." Paige thought of "different teaching methods and ways to address their different needs." Michael, a high school teacher who was working in a school with racial problems, noted that multiculturalism meant "realizing that you can't educate everybody the same."

Understanding perspectives

Several teachers defined multiculturalism to encompass a concern for understanding the perspectives of various cultures. Gabi noted the importance of "finding out about different viewpoints," while Nicole noted that "we are dealing with different kinds of people, from a lot of different backgrounds, with a lot of different beliefs."

Teachers implied that exposure to information about cultures would help to increase understanding of perspectives. For example, Melodie noted that multiculturalism "would be teaching the class of different cultures, different civilizations, their belief systems, their geographical status, where they live, what they eat, what they wear." Barbara more specifically addressed the need for understanding cultures by looking at issues from multiple perspectives, rather than through the traditional ethnocentric lens:

> I would define it [multiculturalism] as an approach to life which sees many viewpoints, more than just whatever culture you were raised in. And schools traditionally tend to look at subjects from a White perspective and I think the world's too little to do that anymore. So, when you teach history, you have to consider things like, Columbus wasn't the first person in this country. And you have to talk about where the African American population got its roots, what they've been through that other populations haven't been through. You have to look at the fact that we condemn what happened in Europe during the Second World War and yet we had our Japanese in concentration camps. And these are things that kids need to think about because I think despite the age [elementary students], I think most kids are able to understand broad issues.

Perceived differences in definitions

When asked if their definitions of multiculturalism differed from the definitions of their education professors, teachers gave varied answers. Several teachers who perceived a difference between their own definitions and the definitions they attributed to their professors appeared to criticize

their professors for having too narrow a view of the concept. These teachers seemed to view themselves as holding more holistic and complex views of multiculturalism. For example, Gabi noted:

> It seemed like in classes they did a lot more talking on it, based just on race . . . . It's a lot more complicated than just 'this is how you deal with African American people' . . . . I have a couple of textbooks where you have a page on how to deal with African Americans and you have a page on how to deal with Hispanics, and you have a page on—and I'm kind of thinking, you know, this is not, this is not the way I really look at it.

Belinda noted that she felt that it was addressed in that they made us think about it," but criticized "those artificial means of incorporating things in your classroom, incorporating African American literature . . . . Beyond that, I don't think it was addressed more than the African American issue." She continued, "I think I would compare it into that it's a big deal to bring in something, that there's times where you do multicultural. And it's opposed to, I feel that it should be constantly around, as in constantly part of everything you do."

Yet another teacher, Nicole, criticized her professors for not blending multiculturalism into the routine of their course work: "I felt a lot of the time that our professors approached multiculturalism as a, like a separate thing. Like there's literature and there's multicultural literature, and there's history and there's multicultural history, and I don't see it that way."

This perception was not universal: Melodie—who disagreed with her professors' views—noted that some faculty thought of multiculturalism as something "to be taught 100% of the time, throughout the whole curriculum

every day." That is, "certain professors" felt that multiculturalism "should be the overriding concern." She noted that the professors who stressed multiculturalism "were of a different culture than what I am." Melodie has made a conscious decision **not** to teach multicultural information to her students, explaining, "I don't know what's important and what's not important. I don't want to be the person to make that decision . . . . They can get it from another teacher somewhere on down the line, but that's not where my focus is."

Several teachers, including some whose views differed from their perceptions of their professors' views, found it difficult to remember much preservice discussion of the issue of multiculturalism. Melodie noted, "It wasn't discussed much." Paige noted, "I don't remember them talking about it much. I think I really can't recall any classes that really talked about it. . . . (How were multicultural issues made a part of your course work in teacher ed?) I don't think it was."

Belinda noted, "I guess I never really felt that it was, a definition was given" by her professors. Still another teacher, Barbara, noted of her professors, "Some of them I felt didn't even deal with it." She noted that "I had some professors who I felt would prefer that it was still a man's world and they were still on top and the rest of us should get out of their field because women didn't belong in that field. That was the impression that they were giving to us all. And we were all fighting back! (Laughter) . . . . We're going to stay here, so teach us something."

It is, of course, possible that the teachers' recollections of their preservice educations are incomplete. For example, Michael began:

> The only statements I can hear being said about it were, "we can't teach all students alike." I don't remember it so much as an issue that came

> up. I know that sounds bad . . . . I don't think that it was focused on that much. . . . No, I'm sorry, that's not right. In Ed Psych . . . , one thing that was very meaningful to me was my TA [teaching assistant] was a wonderful guy, he was Black, and he gave us a test . . . we were discussing the SAT and ACT and how some minorities say that it is biased. He gave us a test that someone in Watts in Los Angeles wrote and I think that I got a 6 out of 25 on it . . . . It really made an impression on me . . . . That class [Ed Psych] addressed it . . . . Like the special ed class, I can remember. Yes, it was a class with a lot of educational theory, what class was that? EPS 201 [an Educational Policy course]. It addressed theories like . . . Du Bois's and several Black leaders in that era. Just for a different point of view—their perceptions of education, their problems, I read a lot of articles like that. "Here's the problem with education; this is how we should change it. This is the problem with the cities"—but other than a professor/teacher standing up there conducting a big seminar on multiculturalism, it just doesn't come to mind.

That teacher's qualifier, that "it just doesn't come to mind," right after giving so many examples, again points out that the references to a lack of multiculturalism in their preservice programs may not indicate a total absence of the topic, as such comments at first appear to suggest. Nonetheless, the teachers' comments did imply that multiculturalism was not perceived as a program-wide concern of their preservice education.

Goals

We heard implied goals in both teachers' and the literature's definitions of multiculturalism. Therefore, we encompassed teachers' goals into our discussion of their definitions of multiculturalism. We wanted to compare the definitions and goals of the teachers in our sample with those of the literature on multicultural education; therefore, we used a popular typology of multicultural education in our study (Sleeter & Grant, 1994; Grant & Secada, 1990). This typology—although neutral on the surface—can be interpreted as portraying a mainstream to radical view of multicultural education. Mainstream views would include the goal of *teaching human relations and social harmony;* the more radical views would be the goals *to teach students to promote equity and pluralism* and *to teach students to analyze inequality and to work together toward social change.*

The majority of the teachers in our sample (five of nine) ranked the mainstream goal, *teaching human relations and social harmony,* as the most important. Belinda explained, "I think it looks at it in a more positive way that we're all human and that goes beyond surface characteristics in a person and [means] really looking at working together." The implication that working together does not come easily is made explicit in Michael's response:

> I think daily my biggest thing I'm most upset with the kids is that, like I said, they don't have the open mind. They don't know how to relate with each other. . . . I read an article recently on the biggest problem with discipline with the kids is they never learn how to discuss anything. . . . These kids do not know how to shut their mouths and listen to another point of view and be polite. And no matter what I do . . . , it's not changing. If they learned how to relate with each other first, and at least listen, and open their minds, then I think a lot of

other things would be taken care of. So definitely, learning how to interact politely, professionally is most important.

Yet another teacher thought of the importance of getting along after completing school. Mandy explained, "I mean, everywhere you work you have to be able to get along with people and if it doesn't start here in the schools where it should be, they're not going to know what to do when they get out there in the real world."

The remaining four teachers were evenly split between the goals *to promote equity and pluralism and analyze life situations* and *to analyze inequality and work together toward social change.* Summarizing their explanations is difficult because common themes were not apparent to us. At times, it seemed they were emphasizing a human relations aspect not too different from that of those who chose *human relations and social harmony* as their first goal. This reminded us of Sleeter and Grant's (1994) observation that, "in our experience, teachers and preservice students often say they prefer this approach [a social reconstructionist perspective] over the other four, but their implementation has more in common with the Human Relations approach than with this approach" (p. 236). In our study, Nicole, who chose *promote equity and pluralism and analyze life situations*, noted, "I have found that unless I talk or have open communication with my students about understanding each other or really analyzing life situations and understanding how to accept other people or accept other children, that I can't go on. It's like a stumbling block." She referred to her second goal, *analyze inequality and work together toward social change*, "which has been very important also, and we talk a lot about fairness, and I feel like those sort of go together. It's been real important to get through an average day."

Two teachers chose as their primary goal *analyze inequality and work together toward social change.* Barbara hoped that "if the students can recognize inequality and if they've been grounded in respect for all people then I think inequality will not sit right with them and they'll want to change things. . . . Then I think maybe there's a future for all of us because if the children of the world can analyze inequality and do something about it then they're the ones we have to depend on." In explaining the importance of this goal, Gabi noted that it is important to teach students "to stand up for what you think is right, not just go along with whatever's going on or it's just easy to be quiet. If someone is being wronged . . . you need . . . to stand up for somebody else . . . . I think when people take it into 'what can I do?' and 'what can we do?' that you need to give them techniques to make things better and to talk about doing better."

Although the promotion of *institutional* change did not come through in their explanations of their rankings of teaching goals, elsewhere in the interviews at least one of the teachers referred to institutionalized barriers to equality. Gabi, one of the teachers who had listed *analyze inequality and work together toward social change* as the primary goal, noted that, at her school, minority students were bused in and were therefore denied opportunities to participate in after-school activities such as receiving after-school help from teachers and participating in the school choir. She also referred to the issue of curriculum as problematic: the school choir switched from an emphasis on white music to Black gospel music, which created some friction. A white child's parent was concerned that "we don't have that kind of music in our home." Yet Gabi pointed out, "We've done predominantly white music for I don't know how long. And nobody said 'boo' about it."

New Teachers' Recommendations for Teacher Education

All participants had recommendations for teacher education, which can be grouped into the following categories:

1. course work in multicultural content;
2. course work in multicultural knowledge construction;
3. course work in multicultural pedagogy;
4. field experiences;
5. qualifications and characteristics of teacher education faculty.

Course work in multicultural content

Banks (1993, p. 20) gives a definition of content integration, "the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline," which describes the recommendations which students offered within this category. Katie suggested that teacher educators should give a definition of multiculturalism, "because it wasn't covered very well. . . . So I think it should be more a part of the education system of educating teachers and things like that. . . . I don't think a lot of people really know what it means including myself too." Belinda, echoing a similar sentiment, states:

> So much of our teacher ed, there's set philosophies. You know what the philosophy of teaching reading is. You know what the philosophy of teaching math is. And this university hasn't really addressed,

> "What is our philosophy of multiculturalism?". . . . The university's philosophy needs to be put through in their students that they put out.

Barbara feels that you first need to be aware of and believe that multicultural education is important. Then, she continues, "you need the background, the history. You need to know some important foundations and steps that different cultures have gone through and what formed their culture. And then . . . you need the nitty gritty . . . . The street language, the body language . . . ." Michael, thinking back to his student teaching experience in a homogeneous school, talks about the need for a course on multiculturalism in which people would talk about the "different pressures the different groups . . . are going through. Could be just an eight-week course . . . that just would bring these issues up, and realize that/I mean I've run into kids who never saw a Black person except on TV."

Course work in multicultural knowledge construction

The new teachers' recommendations for this category fit well into Banks' definition of knowledge construction, an ability which student teachers need to develop in order to "help their students to understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within it" (p. 21). Quotes have already been given which specifically address looking at an issue from the viewpoints of the diverse groups involved and understanding a culture from an insider's perspective. Barbara, who experienced the excitement and the promise of the

Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, explains why the process of knowledge construction is important to her:

> We've got to learn to get along with each other. And we haven't to date. I don't think we've done a very good job. So I think our future has got to change. We've got to include other perspectives because there's not going to be one dominant culture anymore, I hope.

Course work in multicultural pedagogy

Banks believes that teachers should design their practice to create an equity pedagogy, a process by which they will "modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social-class groups" (1993, p. 21). Paige was one of several new teachers who mentioned that they would include course work in learning how to implement cooperative learning, while others mentioned the importance of accommodating diverse learning styles. Mandy recommended that there should be a course in counseling, because "teachers are not only teachers, they're moms, they're baby-sitters, they're lawyers, the whole bit . . . . They're coming at you and saying 'I need help, what do I do . . . .' So I definitely think some kind of training in that area would be very, very beneficial." Belinda suggested that multicultural education could be addressed in the hands-on methods classes, and especially recommended addressing the topic of English as a Second Language. She comments on the necessity to reflect a multicultural approach throughout the teacher education program:

> I think if you're going to take the approach that you're constantly hitting it, consistently hitting it, with your children all the time from

> all angles, that you do the same with your teacher education program and hit it from every angle.

Field Experiences

Three of the new teachers expressed a belief that there must be an early field experience, and that this experience must engender in student teachers an understanding of what the reality of teaching involves. Gabi points out that "you don't want to go through four years and have your first experience with children and realize I couldn't do this . . . . Teaching is hard enough without going into it not liking it." In a poignant moment, Melodie explains:

> Get them out earlier, freshman year. They need to know what it's like, realistically know what it's like, dealing with these problems. Are you going to want to be exposed to kids who have runny noses and cough on you . . . ? I mean, not the academics, not can I teach a social studies lesson, can I deal with these kids on an interpersonal level? That's what they need to know.

Nicole was one of many who suggested that student teachers be placed in culturally diverse schools. She stated that "there are too many of my colleagues while I was student teaching that were in all-white classrooms, which I mean, if they're going to go back up north and possibly work in the inner city, it was worthless." Michael suggested that "it'd be great if you could place everybody student teaching in a school like this . . . . With very diverse backgrounds of students, with all its problems. Because it all gets easier." He also felt that it would be beneficial for student teachers to understand the "whole teaching aspect: This is day one, this is what you're

going to run into, these are the parents that'll come and cuss at you, bring in some people to treat you badly."

Other suggestions included having a cultural interpreter to explain classroom dynamics in early field observations, mentoring of student teachers by educators of different races, performing community service in the community served by the school, and having the opportunity to reflect on field experiences with other student teachers under the guidance of a multiculturally competent and sensitive educator. Gabi says: "I think the key is to have experience working with a variety of students when you're still in a position where you have help and guidance and you're supposed to be struggling with this."

Qualifications and characteristics of teacher education faculty

Among the comments about qualifications and characteristics of teacher education faculty are the following recommendations: the teacher education faculty should be multicultural; the faculty should be credible; the faculty should have experience teaching in public schools with diverse populations; and the faculty should model the philosophy and pedagogy of multiculturalism in their own curriculum and in their instructional practices. Gabi explains: "I think we need to have a multicultural faculty that's teaching us. You know, no matter how much you read about it in a book, experience and hands-on is a lot better." Paige describes the ideal teacher educator as "a person who's taught for twenty years . . . . I guess in a multicultural environment . . . . Someone who has some experience. One who could tell stories about this and that. What happened in her classroom. This is what you do if this happens."

On the subject of credibility, Nicole makes the case:

I'd say that if you're going to talk about a group of people, you need to be credible . . . . You need to have spent time with a group of people, or something that establishes some sort of credibility. And, and that, I mean, that's the crux of multiculturalism.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study have several implications for the practice of teacher education:

Teacher educators should be sensitive to and accommodate differences among teacher education students. The variety of new teachers' definitions of multiculturalism, choices of teaching goals, and recommendations for teacher education suggests that teacher education students will differ in the beliefs, values, and life experiences they bring to their study of teacher education. Because of the differences among students in terms of their pre-college awareness of, contact with, and attitudes toward diverse groups and multicultural issues, teacher educators will need to design programs which "start where students are, relate to their experiential background, build on the language and learning style they bring from home, and develop more effectively students' mastery of basic [multicultural] skills" (Sleeter & Grant, 1994, p. 231).

Teachers valued guided interactions and opportunities for reflection with members of other cultures or otherwise credible educators. Neither passive observation of diverse classrooms nor mere contact with people of different backgrounds was perceived as sufficient to effect multicultural growth; the presence of a mentor/cultural interpreter was perceived as the

necessary component for cognitive and affective change. Children in the field placement classrooms, who shared their viewpoints and concerns with student teachers, were mentioned as facilitators in the development of student teachers' multicultural awareness and sensitivity. Some cooperating teachers, faculty, and fellow student teachers were perceived as helpful in this development. Martin (1991, p. 295) states that the teacher education institution should expect the cooperating teacher to model multicultural teaching:

> The student-teacher should be able to rely upon the cooperating teacher to give the consummate performance of multicultural teaching, enabling the student-teacher to expand her or his own repertoire. This is important because there is research to suggest that student-teachers tend to imitate the behaviors of their cooperating teachers.

Teacher educators—if they acknowledge practitioners' perceived needs—should empower their students to teach human relations and social harmony. When asked about a possible first choice for topics in a preservice course on multiculturalism, five of our teachers chose "social aspects of the classroom." Katie remarked that "I think if you don't understand the social dynamics of your class, I don't think you can really move much farther . . . . You need to be sensitive to what they need and what they're coming from, their experience." Nicole said that "until I established some sort of classroom community, . . . I couldn't do anything else, whether or not I had a great curriculum, or a great plan, didn't matter." Belinda noted that "that's what's going to carry with anyone when they leave your classroom, how they treat other people with regard to their culture or their heritage." The concern for creating a classroom climate in which everyone felt that they were a valued member of the class, which was mentioned by several teachers, is also a goal

of human relations. The need for learning how to teach human relations skills, traditionally thought of as part of the elementary teacher's task of attending to the socialization of children, was articulated by the secondary teachers in our study as well.

The teachers' concern with human relations and social harmony suggested that their schools may be under a cloud of racial polarization and that a more advanced level of meaningful dialogue between races cannot yet take place (see Banks, 1994). It seems likely that issues of power struggles over curriculum content (Apple, 1992), the reconstruction of society (Sleeter & Grant, 1994) and an emphasis on nurturing subgroups within the population (Haberman & Post, 1990) will remain, at best, secondary among teachers' concerns until their classrooms can progress from racial polarization to meaningful dialogue (Banks, 1994).

Teacher educators should work together to articulate the teacher education program's multicultural philosophy, goals, and approach. Several students, when questioned about their teacher education professors' definitions of multiculturalism, felt that they did not have any. They received information in some courses, but there was no sense that a multicultural philosophy permeated the framework of teacher education. The intellectual curiosity and scholarly orientation of these students prompted some of them to question the lack of a theory base in the multicultural information which they did receive. Martin (1991, p. 297) states that teacher education institutions "must clearly and firmly articulate multicultural goals to their students, faculty, supervisory staff, the public school educators with whom they work, and the communities in which they exist." She believes that the institutions should "perpetuate a cycle of empowerment which begins with their advocacy of a model of teaching that

presents professional candidates who are competent in representing the needs and aspirations of an increasingly diverse school population" (p. 297).

Sleeter and Grant believe that educators need to be very clear in their own minds about the meaning of multicultural education, its goals, its target population, its vision of society, its ideas about how to achieve a better society, and its assumptions about learning (1994, p. vii). Bringing this message to individual educators, they state:

> If this is your first attempt to grapple with social-justice and multicultural issues, recognize that you have taken the first step in a long process of learning. These are very complex issues. Often those who agree with us on our choice of approaches [Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist] do so at a rhetorical level only: They adopt our words, but they have yet to think through the implications of these words for living and teaching. Learning any of the approaches well means learning to teach differently—and in most cases very differently—from usual.
>
> Which approach is the best one is a value decision that the individual educator must make. . . . One cannot choose not to choose, because to accept the status quo is to make a choice. (pp. 250-251)

Limitations

Any study must recognize the limits on generalizability that result from its sample selection process. Because teachers in our sample chose to participate in this study with the knowledge that it was on multiculturalism, we may be underreporting the insights of those for whom multiculturalism is not a priority or for whom multiculturalism holds negative connotations. Also, our sample consisted of graduates of a single university; there may exist a greater diversity of beliefs about multicultural education than what was evident in our varied but limited sample.

Implications for Future Research

Future studies should include graduates of other universities and a more racially and ethnically diverse and gender-balanced sample. Future studies should also include teachers in settings with either higher or lower proportions of diverse students. This may provide a richer and more varied description of teachers' views on multicultural education.

Future research should also investigate whether our teachers' views were unique or (as we suspect) fairly representative. In addition, it would be useful to expand this line of research from describing what teachers know and believe to investigating how they came to hold those beliefs (Carter, 1990).

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